



Littlefield Letters



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No. 9

SEPTEMBER MUSTER CALL

date: Thursday
13 September 1990
time: 6:15 p.m.
Mess Call
place: Wyatt's Cafeteria
Hancock Center

This month's meeting will feature Wyndy Faulk as our speaker. Wyndy is one of the camp's newer members and enjoys reenacting. He is the Company Clerk for Terry's Texas Rangers. Come, hear Wyndy and join with us for an evening of good Southern hospitality, food, and drink. See you there.

A NEW CONFEDERATE

It is our honor and privilege to announce the birth of a new Confederate born to Compatriot Dan and Kathy Kuykendall. REBECCA MARIE KUYKENDALL was born on 13 August 1990, and she weighed seven pounds and five and one half ounces. We are happy to report that Mother and Daughter are both doing fine. As you may know, Dan is an avid Confederate and Reenactor-Cavalry style. He has been singing Confederate songs to her already. Knowing Dan, we suppose that it won't be long before he has her riding with him on horseback. Congratulations to

the new parents and best wishes to Rebecca on her birth. May all the joys and happiness of life be yours.

BETCHA' DIDN'T KNOW

Quite a few living ex-Presidents were around during the WBTS. There were five in number to be exact: Martin Van Buren, Franklin Pierce, Millard Fillmore, James Buchanan, and John Tyler. Betcha this doesn't fool you either. Not one of these men supported Abraham Lincoln in the Presidential campaign of 1860.

The Southern spirit is an indomitable one. During the war acute shortages were faced. The ingenious Southerners produced substitutes for basic household commodities. "Confederate coffee" was made from dried sweet potatoes and burnt peanuts. Salt was obtained from filtering the dirt of smokehouses thus extracting the salt from previously cured meats. Plants supplied much of the dye used to color homespun cloth. "Confederate gray" was obtained from myrtle bushes, and the well-known butternut brown color used in the dyeing of the uniforms was obtained from the hulls of walnuts.

"THE SOUTH IN NORTHERN EYES" Part II
(continued from August issue)

Times were ripe for dissension between North and South. Issues necessary to the plantation system like tariffs and subsidies to trans-Atlantic shipping were constantly stirring up trouble with the North. Westward expansion, especially land acquired after the Mexican War accentuated hostilities and nearly brought about Southern secession. New Englanders had a tendency to transfer their hostility toward slavery to the South itself. Recall the Compromise laws of 1850. The fugitive slave law was passed. Slavery was abolished in D.C.; California was admitted as a free state. New Mexico and Utah were organized with slavery a local option. The Kansas/Nebraska Act made slavery legal where it had been prohibited. The Dredd Scott decision by the Supreme Court said the government could not outlaw slavery in the territories. New Englanders sent rifles and recruits to bloody Kansas. Then there was the John Brown raid of 1859. With the organization of the Republican Party, the regional alignments were all but complete.

The attitudes of the New England authors were based on moral grounds that then became political. Abolitionism was deep-seated in New England, and many writers expressed its spirit in their writings. The reality of the issue is that Garrison and his contemporaries fell into the habit of fictionalizing a way of life that was out of harmony with their own. Garrison's hatred of slavery became hatred of the slave-holder, and the slave holder became indistinguishable from the Southerner.

Here is a classic example of Garrison in a denunciation of Sen. Pelleg Sprague of Maine. "You are in amicable companionship and popular repute with thieves and adulterers; with slave-holders, slave-breeders, slave-dealers, slave-destroyers; those who trample law and order beneath

their feet; with the plunderers of the public mall; with ruffians, who insult pollute and lacerate helpless women; and with conspirators against the lives and liberties of New England citizens." Garrison's view of the Southerner was as an irresponsible tyrant, a hypocrite, and a robber of God's poor--guilty of fraud.... of unequaled baseness and meanness. He showed the Southerner with wolf-like ferocity multiplying the stripes on the bodies of his victims, reveling in their blood. He said they drove women into the fields, stole infants, trafficked in human flesh and dishonored the institution of marriage. According to him, they also licensed incest and adultery, refused to teach the Bible to slaves and lived in constant fear of revolt. With time, Garrison's charges became more acceptable to the North. After 25 years of such blackness being puffed into the air, New Englanders' were not able to penetrate the subtler yet nonetheless distorting haze which hung over Mrs. Stowe's picture of life in the South.

Like most writers of her time, Mrs. Stowe's first hand knowledge of the South was extremely limited. Her only direct personal acquaintance with the South was a visit of a few hours to a Kentucky plantation. To many her picture seemed accurate, if only because compared to abolitionist rhetoric, it was mild.

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Rhetoric at the town meeting added fuel to the fire. The one person who became more influential in the abolition movement than anyone else began unsolicited in 1837 when he arose to denounce the murder of an anti-slavery newspaper editor in Alton, Ill. Wendell Phillips began his battle for the Northern mind; his eye was on the North, but his shots were aimed at the South. To maintain his appearance of vitality, the agitator must continually intensify his attack. Phillips became more fanatical; he often spoke of the possibility of armed rebellion in the South. His was "to startle the South to madness, so that every step she takes in her blindness is one more step toward ruin." By 1860 he said that John Brown had more of a right to hang Gov Wise of Virginia than he had to hang Brown.

In 1838 John Greenleaf Whittier fictionalized slave life in the South. Supposedly true, "The Narrative of James Williams" was very close to the later and more famous Uncle Tom's Cabin. Whittier failed to check the validity of the story which was later found to be untrue. Even though withdrawn, it had gone through 6 editions in 8 months and was very popular.

Whittier's Quaker idealism shrouded reality. It did not occur to him that secession meant defeat for his abolition cause, or that emancipation would not solve the enormous problem of race relations.

After 12 years of conditioning, the Northern mind was prepared for Uncle Tom's Cabin, a Gothic romance in an anti-slavery plot.

Contributing more toward hostility toward the South was James Russell Lowell. His poem "The Present Crisis" (1844) was a platform piece for 20 years. In a review it was said that poetry suffers from overwork when it is the handmaiden of reform. Putnam's magazine said, "It is astonishing what bad poetry a man will write when laboring under the conviction that he has a great social evil to discover and to remedy."

Both Whittier and Lowell used their opposition to slavery to generate abolitionist propaganda based on hatred and fear to create a villain in the Northern imagination that the North would soon be quite willing to meet in battle.

Longfellow viewed the South as an abolitionist. In 1860 he wrote in his journal that "secession of the North from freedom would be worse than secession of the South from the Union."

Nathaniel Hawthorne was the only major New England writer that was out of sympathy with the Northern hostility toward the South. Even though slavery was one of those evils, "the progress of the world...leaves some evil or wrong behind it, which the wisest of mankind...could never have found the way to rectify." He recognized the wide differences between the North and South. He thought John Brown justly hung.

The New York writers were quite different from the New Englanders. They never adopted the abolition sentiment and were very closely tied economically to the South. It was estimated that New York dominated the cotton trade and that 30% to 40% of the price of cotton went to New Yorkers. In 1849 alone the South purchased \$76 million worth of goods from New York.

These economic ties also were reflected in social ties. New York merchants gave generously to Southern charities. Partnerships, friendships, and even marriages joined New York and Southern families.

The attitude in New York at the time of Bryant, Melville, and Whitney was an objection to slavery without cursing the slave-holding South. In fact, there were several newspapers in New York which were defenders of the Southern system of slave labor.

The earlier generation of writers like James F. Cooper, James Kirke Paulding, and Washington Irving were much traveled, had Southern acquaintances, and were familiar with Southern ways. But these men had either retired or died by 1851.

"THE WAR"

It was a time, of shot and shell,
of hatred and of war;

but now, a memory for someone to tell,
and one, for the Devil to score.

A time of death, in the trenches and
fields,
from battle, sickness and more;

campaigning for victory, from valleys
and hills,
trying to even the score.

Two armies (they faced) one South one
North,
once brethern, now are foe;

as friends and families went forth,
united, they were no more.

Manassas, Shiloh, Antietam too,
men fought and died together;

Gaines Mill, Gettysburg, but to name
a few,
their fields are bloody forever.

Four long years, of deprivation and
strife,
this nation, not one but two;

six hundred thousand, lost their life,
before this time was through.

One North, one South, together once
more,
with wounds to heal and mend;

for now they meet, on the fields of
war,
as family and as friends.

With endless fields of marbled stone,
and mournful wreath laid by;

are monuments, to the fallen ones,
now resting in the sky.

Steven J. Vanderhoof
1-11-88

- THE LITTLEFIELD LETTERS -

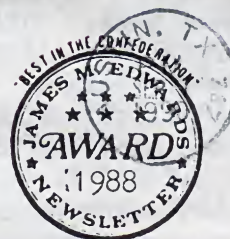
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